

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 ANKARA 003033

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,
TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Government puts education bill in deep freeze - Sabah
Soros obsessed with Bush - Hurriyet
'Rolling Thunder' bikers back Bush - Hurriyet
Harley bikers meet with 'Commander in-Chief' - Milliyet
PM Erdogan may visit Tehran in June - Turkiye

OPINION MAKERS

US, El-Sadr break cease fire: 23 killed - Zaman
UN's Brahimi stuck between Americans and Iraqis - Zaman
Washington, IGC at odds over new Iraqi president -
Cumhuriyet
Tension between Bremer, IGC - Yeni Safak
Saudi Arabia pledges full support to 'TRNC' - Zaman
FM Gul seeks support for 'TRNC' at OIC - Radikal
Egypt supports Sharon's withdrawal plan - Cumhuriyet
Soros determined to topple Bush - Yeni Safak
Weekly Standard: 70 percent of US media liberal - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

Turkey and the Greater Middle East initiative: "Radikal" expects PM Erdogan to criticize the US Greater Middle East initiative at the G-8 Summit in Sea Island, Georgia, to which Erdogan is being invited as a 'democratic partner.' Erdogan will tell the summit that democracy cannot be imposed through force, and will also suggest greater EU involvement in the process. "Cumhuriyet" writes that Turkish and US diplomats will meet this week to discuss Ankara's contribution to the US initiative. Ankara will support the project by sharing its free market and democracy experience with regional countries. Ankara reacted strongly at being lumped in the same category with the countries to be transformed. This reaction forced Washington to shift its characterization of Turkey to that of a 'democratic ally,' "Cumhuriyet" claims.

'The case of Turkish Al-Qaida': The trial of 69 Turks suspected in the Istanbul suicide bombings, which have been linked to al-Qaeda, opened on Monday. However, judges in the case immediately broke off the proceedings because the State Security Court (SSC) system has been abolished as part of recent judicial reforms. Turkey's parliament abolished the controversial tribunals, which have handled political and terrorism cases, in an amendment to the Constitution. Legislation to replace the SSC system with Heavy Penal Courts has not yet been passed by Parliament. Four truck bombs killed 61 people and wounded 750 in attacks on two Istanbul synagogues, the British consulate and the local headquarters of British-owned HSBC bank last November. After the hearing, Justice Minister Cemil Cicek said the government planned to send draft legislation to Parliament on Tuesday that transfers security-related cases to new civilian courts.

Higher education reform bill shelved: The higher education reform bill is to be shelved by the Government until the end of the year when the ruling AK Party government will seek to implement it once again. The AK Party is also considering a plan to introduce optional Koran courses in elementary and secondary schools. Mainstream dailies expect the AK Party

not to press ahead with the controversial bill that has been criticized by the TGS and secularist groups. PM Erdogan told a party group meeting on Monday that the government's planned education reform cannot be implemented now, and that the party should avoid creating tension by forcing the issue. Erdogan said his government would review the bill after President Sezer vetoed it on Friday.

Turkey may take over ISAF command: PM Erdogan signaled on Saturday that Turkey could send more troops and take over command of NATO's peacekeeping force in Afghanistan next year. "As a NATO member we have the opportunity to renew the mission we carried out for ISAF previously. We are aware of our duties as a member of this alliance," he told a news conference in London, adding that he did not believe that such a deployment would require parliamentary approval. If it is agreed, Turkey could take command of ISAF in February 2005. This would boost the number of Turkish troops in Afghanistan from 155 to around 1,500.

PM Erdogan accuses Sharon: "Sharon should have helped us, but he did not. Assassinations and recent attacks by Israel left no room for Turkey's peace efforts," PM Erdogan told an international conference of the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) in Istanbul on Monday. Erdogan, who had previously offered Turkey as a mediator between Israel and its neighbors, accused Israel in March of "state terrorism" after the killing of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. Erdogan told the conference that Turkey would maintain and develop its economic ties with Israel, but emphasized that Turkey strongly disapproves of the "unlawful" assassinations of Palestinian leaders and the raid on the Rafah refugee camp in Gaza.

Air Force wants Israeli arms: Turkey's Air Forces Command has presented the AK Party government a list outlining its 'emergency' arms requirements, "Milliyet" reports. The list outlines a proposed weapons purchase agreement with Israel that amounts to \$800 million. The Air Force wants to purchase Israeli 'smart' missiles, mini-assassination planes and electronic equipment for F-16 night flights. The list also includes a deal for modernization of F-4 jetfighters.

DEHAP warns of increasing armed conflict in SE Turkey: Tuncer Bakirhan, leader of the pro-Kurdish party DEHAP, warned in a letter to PM Erdogan about increasing clashes between PKK members and Turkish security forces in the country's southeast. Bakirhan said that increased conflict and casualties pose a threat to peace and democracy in the region. He blamed the government for failing to discuss a democratic solution to the Kurdish problem since the unilateral cease-fire was declared by the PKK five years ago.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

- a) Iraq
- b) Global Defense Posture Review

"An Apology"
Melih Asik observed in the mass appeal Milliyet (6/1): "The US press has started making efforts to redeem itself to its readers for disseminating the lies produced by the Bush administration. Yet the style of the apology is far from satisfactory. When you notice the way the crimes against humanity in Abu Ghraib are being dealt with in the American press, you see that there is no reference to torture. The term 'torture' is replaced by 'individual psychopath,' 'rape' and 'abuse.' How can we talk about a free press when torture cannot be called by its name. It seems that democracy is not working in America, even while the US claims to be bringing democracy to the Middle East. One wonders what type of democracy that would be?"

"The US Global Defense Posture"
Fikret Ertan noted in the Islamist-intellectual Zaman (6/1): "As a matter of fact, the US intended to restructure its military presence around the world right after the end of Cold War. Yet the last 10 years have gone by without any concrete action. The restructuring initiative on this began after 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. . The US Global Defense Posture Review is designed to reduce the number of large bases such as those in Germany, and redeploy to smaller bases in countries such as Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. These countries are expected to be the new hosts for small American bases to be developed over

the next 5 or 6 years. . The US bases, both new and old, will be the main centers for fighting against the new enemy - international terrorism. Militarily speaking, the bases will be designed to launch quick responses to terrorist actions or enemy states. The US appears to be asking for some bases and certain military privileges from Turkey. These requests are obviously part of the Global Defense Posture Review. Turkey is not the only country on the list, so we should not maintain the unrealistic position that if Turkey rejects the US demands, the restructuring will not be implemented. That approach would be wrong, because the US can move forward with its restructuring with or without Turkey's contribution. Let's keep in mind that if Turkey stays out of the new US strategy, there will be a price to pay because many bases will be established in countries around Turkey."

"The US is in Search of A New Adventure"

Zafer Atay commented in the economic-political Dunya (6/1): "It was rumored that the US would open small bases for rapid reaction forces in the Balkans, mainly in new NATO member countries such as Bulgaria and Romania. Such bases have been considered in Hungary, Poland and the Caucasus as well. Under this scenario, Incirlik airbase in Turkey would not be closed, but would be downsized. After the Iraq war began, Washington withdrew its planes that had been used for Operation Northern Watch" from Incirlik because the operation was no longer necessary. Of course, all of this happened before the US started having problems in Iraq. Lately, the US has pushed the idea of opening new bases and intensifying its use of Incirlik. Washington wants to reinforce its air power at Incirlik with 48 new planes. Moreover, it has requested to use the base in Konya. It does not end there. The US is taking the pulse in Turkey for the possibility of deploying U-2 spy planes at Incirlik too. Of course, there is also a proposal for new US bases in Samsun and Trabzon on the Black Sea. Some of these proposals fall within the scope of the defense cooperation agreement between Turkey and the US, and can be agreed without problems. The main problem is with the U-2 planes. There are bad memories about them in Turkey. In 1960, a U-2 plane that took off from Adana was downed by the USSR in Russian airspace. The pilot, Gary Powers, was arrested. The Soviet leader exhibited the pilot and the wreckage of the plane to the world after Ankara and Washington denied the incident. Turkey had a hard time because it had not been informed about this flight by the US. .Why does the US wants these bases? There is no clear answer to that. Some think the US will use all of its power in the near future to break the resistance in Iraq. The situation in Afghanistan is not any better. Although the command belongs to NATO there, the US is reportedly preparing for wider operations in Afghanistan in an effort to capture Osama Bin-Laden. Who knows, maybe the US will start thinking about bringing democracy (!) to another country in the region."

EDELMAN